

Clive Stafford Smith and his fantasy of innocent Krishna Maharaj

Double killer Krishna Maharaj is trying yet again to have his conviction overturned, and the champion of lost causes is in his corner.



In October 1986, Krishna Maharaj murdered father and son Derrick and Duane Moo Young in a Miami hotel room. Why he did this is a long and convoluted story, but the double murder was carried out for a personal, obsessive reason rather than for material gain. He was arrested shortly after Neville Butler, the man he had roped into the crime, contacted the police.

Condemned to death initially, in 2002, his sentence was reduced to life without parole. Clive Stafford Smith – [the Baron Münchhausen of Death Row](#) – has written a book about this case, *Injustice...* which was published in 2012. Dedicated to Marita Maharaj – the wife of his murdering chum – it has been reviewed favourably and with the usual [lack of critical faculty](#) by most of the liberal press.

One is tempted to ask if any of these reviewers has a gramme of common sense, much less any legal training. In his chapter on the trial, Stafford Smith points out that after the prosecution had presented its compelling case, the defense rested. Unsurprisingly, Maharaj was convicted on all 5 counts, which included the unlawful possession of a firearm.



Convicted double murderer Krishna Maharaj, one of those rare birds, a rich man on death row. Although his sentence was later reduced to life imprisonment, his convictions for killing father and son Derrick and Duane Moo Young were not overturned.

In the penalty phase, he took the stand and protested his innocence. You're supposed to do that in the trial proper, dummy! As Stafford Smith admits on page 69, this was too late – but what of the investigation? Well, according to him, there was none, not so anyone would notice. Like this BBC [so-called investigation](#), Stafford Smith portrays the Miami police as a cross between Inspector Clouseau and Commander Ali Dizaei; they are tripping over bodies left, right and centre, that's when they are not turning a blind eye to the men running the South American drug cartel, who are fingered as the real killers. The latest court action claims this latter is not only the case, but that there are witnesses to prove it. What is wrong with this scenario, apart from everything?



A screengrab of Neville Butler testifying at the murder trial of Krishna Maharaj.

If you, dear reader, were accused of a murder that happened ten years ago, would you be able to account for your movements on the day? Probably not. What about one committed this time last year? Again, probably not. Michael Stone [had that problem](#). What though if you were accused of committing a murder yesterday, and were thirty miles away at the material time, would you not be able to bring forward witnesses to that effect readily?

Maharaj can now, but he couldn't then. A man who calls not one witness in his defense, who does not even take the stand to contradict the testimony of his principal accuser, will not be permitted to bring forth supposedly new evidence two decades and more down the line.

All the talk about drug dealers with guns using the same hotel at the same time is smoke and mirrors; like [Lee Harvey Oswald](#), Maharaj was caught with his hand in the till, and Clive Stafford Smith is doing a great job imitating the conspiracy cranks who have hovered around that very simple murder non-mystery for the past half century. Apologists for Oswald make numerous claims, many of them focusing on other, more powerful people who had reasons for wanting the President dead. Unlike Oswald, none of them left their prints all over the crime scene, and unlike Maharaj, none of these other mythical hitmen terminated the Moo Youngs. Yes, we know that during the 80s, Miami was infested with armed drug dealers, those of us who have seen *Miami Vice*.

Is anything more sinister than coincidence needed to explain the presence of such people in the vicinity at the time?

As for Clive Stafford Smith's book, on page 144, he takes a swipe at Jerry Guerinot, the court-appointed lawyer for murderess Linda Carty. Elsewhere, both Stafford Smith and his Reprieve organisation have done [an excellent hatchet job](#) on Guerinot, portraying him as the real reason Carty received the death penalty, rather than the fact that [she orchestrated](#) the brutal kidnapping of a young mother with the intent of snatching her son, and then smothered the victim to death with a plastic bag in the trunk of her car.

The British public were largely duped by the Carty campaign, but superior court judges everywhere are made of sterner stuff. Expect to see this latest frivolous appeal dismissed summarily.

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